

VZCZCXRO3711
OO RUEHPA
DE RUEHAB #0997 2501220
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
O 071220Z SEP 06
FM AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1872
INFO RUEHZK/ECOWAS COLLECTIVE
RUEHSA/AMEMBASSY PRETORIA 1423
RUEHKI/AMEMBASSY KINSHASA 0343

C O N F I D E N T I A L ABIDJAN 000997

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

KINSHASA PASS TO BRAZZAVILLE

E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/07/2016

TAGS: PGOV PREL SENV IV

SUBJECT: COTE D'IVOIRE: GOVERNMENT RESIGNS OVER ILLEGAL TOXIC WASTE DUMP SCANDAL

¶1. (U) On September 6, Prime Minister Banny publicly submitted the resignation of his government and President Gbagbo publicly accepted it. Banny said that he felt obliged to resign because of mounting public anger over the illegal dumping of toxic wastes at several sites around Abidjan. The wastes came from a foreign ship that docked at the port of Abidjan (septel). After several days of mounting public protests, on September 7 street barricades paralyzed much of Abidjan, and the government held an emergency cabinet meeting to deal with the crisis. Banny announced his government's resignation immediately after this cabinet meeting.

¶2. (C) Shortly after the resignation was announced, Leon Koffi, one of his principal advisors, told the Ambassador that Banny's real objective was to use this opportunity to strengthen his control over the government, and that Banny plans to reconstitute essentially the same cabinet minus the Ministers of Transport and Environment and perhaps a few others who bore responsibility for the illegal toxic waste dumping.

¶3. (U) Banny's resignation came against the backdrop of the failure of the September 6 meeting of Cote d'Ivoire's five principal political leaders in Yamoussoukro. Coming out of that meeting, President Gbagbo made no comment to reporters. Former President Bedie, leader of the opposition PDCI (Democratic Party of Cote d'Ivoire), said it had yielded a "meager harvest" and that the Prime Minister needed to continue consultations with the other leaders. Former Prime Minister Ouattara, leader of the opposition RDR (Rally of Republicans), reiterated the opposition's demand that there must be expedited procedures for everyone who is entitled to an Ivoirian certificate of nationality to get one within two or three months. Sidiki Konate, spokesman for rebel FN (New Forces) leader Soro, also said no agreement had been reached on the key issue of identification procedures.

¶4. (C) Comment. It should not be too difficult for Banny to reconstitute a new government with limited changes. However, it is not clear how a cabinet reshuffle would strengthen the Prime Minister's authority or facilitate his ability to revitalize the peace process. End Comment.

Hooks